

Remarks:

This amendment and these remarks are responsive to the final Office action dated March 14, 2006. Prior to entry of this Amendment, claims 1-36 and 48-55 remained pending in the application, claims 45-47 having been withdrawn pursuant to an earlier restriction requirement.

Claims 1-31, 33-36 and 48-55 stand finally rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) based on Friedman et al. (US 6,774,800), variously in view of Navot et al. (US 5,904,671), Mahgerefteh et al. (US 5,570,082) and/or Okada et al. (US 4,704,108). Applicant respectfully disagrees with the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a).

However, claim 32 has been indicated "allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims." By this Amendment, claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of claims 30 and 32, thereby conforming claim 1 to the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter (amended claim 1 is equivalent to claim 32, written in independent form). Claim 1 thus is understood to be in allowable form. Claims 2-29, 31 and 33-35 depend from amended claim 1, and thus also are understood to be in allowable form.

In view of finality of the Office action, and the indication of allowability of claim 32 if rewritten in independent form, applicant has amended claim 1 to include the subject matter of previous claim 32. Claims 30, 32, 36 and 48-55 have been cancelled without prejudice to further prosecution in this application or any other application. Claims 1-29, 31 and 33-35 thus remain pending upon entry of the present Amendment. All remaining claims are understood to be allowable based on the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter.

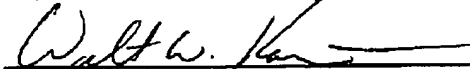
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Regarding the Examiner's statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter, applicant agrees with the Examiner's conclusions regarding patentability of claim 32, without necessarily agreeing with or acquiescing in the Examiner's reasoning. In particular, applicant believes that the application is allowable because the prior art fails to teach, anticipate or render obvious the invention as claimed, independent of how the invention is paraphrased.

Applicant believes that this application is now in condition for allowance, in view of the above amendments and remarks. Accordingly, applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner issue a Notice of Allowability covering the pending claims. If the Examiner has any questions, or if a telephone interview would in any way advance prosecution of the application, please contact the undersigned attorney of record.

Respectfully submitted,

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CERTIFICATE OF FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being facsimile transmitted to Examiner M. Bogart, Group Art Unit 3761, Assistant Commissioner for Patents, at facsimile number (571) 273-8300 on June 14, 2006.


Christie A. Doolittle

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